

MODERN CATCHERS NOT AS EFFICIENT IN ALL DEPARTMENTS AS OLD-TIMERS



MIKE GRADY



DOWERMAN



ROGER BRESNAHAN



STRAWFOOT MCGUIRE



JACK O'NEILL

That the catchers of the present day are an inferior lot is the opinion of well-known baseball men. If one were asked to name all the good catchers in the major leagues he could run over the lot without exhausting his digits.

In the good old days when baseball was not as commercial as it is to-day the catcher was one of the main factors, and usually a brilliant star. He was expected to be more than a human target at which batters aimed.

It is the present-day catcher little can be said other than that he is a fair receiver.

Of course, there are a few exceptions but they are few. King of Chicago and Cramer are the best catchers now playing ball, but it is doubtful if either of them

would compare favorably with the old-line backstops like "Buck" Ewing, "King" Kelly, Charley Bennett, or Jack Clements when they were at their best.

Kelly was the ideal catcher. The pride of Boston was not only an excellent backstop, but he could hit at a very merry clip, and he invented many of the tricks that latter-day scribes prorate on as being inventions of the present generation of players.

Ewing was also a wonderful ball player, "Buck" could hit with the best of them, was a good man on the bases, and as a

thrower, perhaps, has never had an equal. Jack Clements was a great batsman and a good catcher. He was rather large to be very effective on the bases, but his hitting ability generally got him on the bases frequently enough to allow him to make many runs.

So far as hitting ability is concerned the modern backstops do not compare with the old-time catchers.

The Kings and Cramers do not compare with Kelly, Darling, Ewing or Bennett.

Those lads could rap the horse hide, and it was not infrequent that they were leading the league or right up with the leaders.

The catchers of to-day are usually the poorest batsmen on the team, next to the pitchers. Very few of them can be relied upon as hitters, and with the possible exceptions of Mike Grady and Roger Bres-

nahan there is no other hard-hitting backstop in the major leagues.

"Straw Foot" McGuire, still catching for the New York Americans, is a sample of the superiority of the old-time backstop over his modern prototype.

McGuire is catching his twenty-fourth year. Still, he is considered one of the best in the business.

In the old days McGuire was never rated

with Kelly, Darling, Ewing or Bennett.

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nahan of Philadelphia, and Sullivan of Chicago.

Cleveland has a clever receiver in Bemis, although Buelow is a rather slow and plodding backstop.

Detroit has a couple of mutts. Sageden of the Browns is a fair sort of catcher, although no one would call him brilliant. Kitteridge of Washington is also a fair receiver.

Bresnahan of the Giants is a good hitter and fair receiver, as is Bowerman of the same club. King and O'Neill of Chicago are the best pair in either league. Pittsburgh has a fair man in Peitz. Bergen of Brooklyn is a good catcher, as is "Red" Dooin of the Phils.

BASEBALL POPULAR HERE DESPITE CLUBS' POOR SHOWING

Fans Attend Games Regularly. Notwithstanding That the Browns and Cardinals Have Gone Through the Season Without Any Apparent Chance of Finishing Even in the First Division—“Billy” Hamilton, Famous Player, Now a Manager—Has a Winning Team in the Tri-State League.

Baseball in St. Louis seems to have lost some of its popularity, despite the fact that the fans have received little or no encouragement for more than two years. Both Cardinals and Browns have gone through the season at the bottom of the heap of threelossers, giving to the fans little cause for any enthusiasm they may have retained for the national sport.

Managers and owners of the two clubs have given the public two clubs far behind the leaders in the race. It seems that one or the other aggregation should be at the bottom of the list, even though they do not win it.

It may be argued that the Cardinals and Browns have been beaten down with a surplus of talent, which swamps and chills everyone knows that an element of ill fortune has entered into the affairs of both aggregations, but that is no reason why the two clubs have eleven straight games on the home grounds and the other lag so far behind the leaders in the race. It seems that one or the other aggregation should be at the bottom of the list, even though they do not win it.

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It is time that a city of St. Louis importance should be represented by an aggregation qualified to cast honor on the name of the metropolis of the West. It seems that the two teams of the Browns and Cardinals, who play the game with a knowledge of baseball's possibilities, have abandoned the field to the second and third division clubs.

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